



# NEWS

Interagency Council on Homelessness – Mel Martinez, Chairman  
Washington, DC Philip Mangano, Director

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## **BUSH ADMINISTRATION UNLOCKS \$140 MILLION TO HELP PROVIDE EMERGENCY FOOD AND SHELTER FOR LOCAL HOMELESS PROGRAMS**

WASHINGTON – Local homeless shelters and food pantries around the country will soon receive \$140 million in Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding for food, shelter and utility assistance. The news came today at the second meeting of the newly reactivated Interagency Council on Homelessness at the White House.

Today's funding, a part of FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program, is awarded to the United Way each year shortly after the Fiscal Year begins on October 1<sup>st</sup>. The funding will ensure that local shelters and food pantries will have much needed resources during the winter months when demand is greatest and will provide rent and utility payments to prevent the loss of housing by families at risk of homelessness.

"The timing of the release of the \$140 million is critical to helping communities across the country fight homelessness," indicated Philip Mangano, Executive Director of the Council that coordinates federal activities on homelessness. "Prevention of the loss of housing is as important as the intervention with food and shelter."

During today's Council meeting, two respected advocates for the homeless made presentations pointing to an expanded collaboration with the federal government – Nan Roman of the National Alliance to End Homelessness and Carla Javits, President of the Corporation for Supportive Housing.

"We come together today to witness an unprecedented partnership being formed between the federal government, the advocacy community and non-profit housing developers with the objective of ending chronic homelessness," said Housing and Urban Development Secretary Mel Martinez. "Our shared goal is to address the most chronic homeless needs so that we can better serve homeless individuals and families who find themselves without a home to call their own."

Last summer, Martinez outlined the Bush Administration's new strategy that places a greater emphasis on prevention and ending chronic homelessness. Research indicates that 10-to-20 percent of the homeless population utilizes more than half of all federal resources targeted for homeless assistance. By focusing more attention on the needs of long-term homeless persons, more federal resources can be made available to families and individuals who face temporary homelessness.

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As chairman of the Council, Martinez also discussed the unique collaboration between three federal agencies that will provide \$35 million to support local programs that provide permanent housing to the long-term homeless. This program represents an unprecedented effort between HUD and the Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Veterans Administration (VA) and will focus on the homelessness on the streets of local communities.

President Bush reactivated the Interagency Council on Homelessness last year to better coordinate the efforts of 18 federal agencies in addressing the needs of homeless persons. During today's meeting, two new members were added to the ranks of the Council – USA Freedom Corps and the White House Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives.

Several other initiatives were announced today to further the Bush Administration's goal of ending chronic homelessness:

- VA Secretary Anthony Principi announced more than \$12 million to support nearly 1,400 transitional housing units in 53 projects in 22 states and the District of Columbia over the next three years. Thirty-five percent (35%) of these units are being provided by faith-based organizations.
- Nan Roman, President of the National Alliance to End Homelessness, indicated the support of the Alliance and its membership for the Administration's initiative to end chronic homelessness in ten years.
- Carla Javits, President of the Corporation for Supportive Housing announced an initiative among housing developers to develop 150,000 units of supported housing to provide permanent housing solutions for long term homeless individuals.
- Every state will have the opportunity to participate in four regionally based assistance sessions, called Policy Academies, focused on targeting mainstream resources such as Medicaid and substance abuse treatment for those experiencing chronic homelessness.
- Ten regional coordinators will be added to replicate the federal model of collaboration at the state and local level. These Interagency Council coordinators will be charged with working closely with state and local governments as well as providers and advocates.

Congress established the Interagency Council on Homelessness in 1987 to coordinate the activities of the federal government in responding to homelessness. After six years of dormancy, the Bush Administration revitalized the Council this year to forward the strategy to end homelessness. More information on the ICH can be obtained at [www.ich.gov](http://www.ich.gov).

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